

COMMENT

Up to 70 percent of all NTDs can be prevented through the use of folic acid, and a number of educational programs and prevention activities are already underway across the state. To support these programs, the need for timely and accurate population-based data on NTDs is critical.

The N.C. Birth Defects Monitoring Program has made NTD surveillance a major priority. With the assistance of funding from the March of Dimes, the program has recently implemented an enhanced NTD surveillance initiative statewide. This initiative includes: active surveillance of NTDs and selected other major malformations in the state's tertiary hospitals; and voluntary reporting by each of the state genetics centers of prenatally diagnosed cases. Future updates of this report will include data collected from these additional reporting sources.

We hope that the present report as well as future NTD surveillance updates will be of use to those involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating neural tube defect prevention programs in North Carolina. We welcome and invite your comments and questions about this report, and your ideas for subsequent analyses and updates. For questions or comments please contact Robert Meyer at (919) 715-4476 (robert_meyer@mail.ehnr.state.nc.us)

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